

# August

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July						
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September						
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Thursday

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Sunday

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Women's Equality (Suffrage) Day			

# August

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## Health Activities and Observances

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Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month  
Cataract Awareness Month  
Psoriasis Awareness Month  
World Breastfeeding Week (1-7)  
National Minority Donor Awareness Day (1)

NOTES \_\_\_\_\_

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*Help one another is part of  
the religion of our sisterhood.*

-Louisa May Alcott



# August

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## NOTES

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# August

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# August

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Mon 23 \_\_\_\_\_ Mon 30 \_\_\_\_\_

Tue 24 \_\_\_\_\_ Tue 31 \_\_\_\_\_

Wed 25 \_\_\_\_\_


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Fri 27 \_\_\_\_\_

Sat 28 \_\_\_\_\_

Sun 29 \_\_\_\_\_



# Your baby's wellness starts with... A Healthy Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

**C**ongratulations! You're pregnant! Or perhaps you might be trying or thinking about having a baby. Pregnancy can be a thrilling and wonderful part of your life. But it can also be a little scary. You probably have questions about what to do and what not to do. The good choices about your health that you make today will greatly affect the future health of your child. Some women have problem-free pregnancies, but many women encounter some discomforts along the way. By learning about and taking some key, simple steps for you and your baby's wellness, you can both blossom into vibrant, healthy people.

## Pre-Pregnancy Visit

Choosing to get pregnant and becoming a mother is a big decision that requires lots of thought and planning. A pre-conception visit with your provider is one of the most important things you can do, especially if you are older than age 30. You can get expert advice on what you can do to improve your overall health, so you can give your new baby the best start at life. At this visit, you can discuss any nutritional needs or health concerns which you may have before becoming pregnant.

Be sure to talk with your provider about your diet, physical activity, smoking, alcohol or drug use, and sexual history. Don't forget to let her or him know if other health care providers, including mental health providers, are treating you. Review all your medications with your provider, including over-the-counter and prescription medications. Be sure

to ask if it is safe to keep taking them while you are trying to conceive and during pregnancy. If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, an eating disorder, depression, or other long-term health conditions, talk with your health care provider about how it might affect your health and your pregnancy. Don't think that because you have a health condition, you will have serious problems with pregnancy. There are things both you and your health care provider can do to help you have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

## Pre-Pregnancy Tests

Know your family history and share it with your health care provider. You can get genetic counseling before becoming pregnant and possibly be tested for certain genetic conditions, such as Tay-Sachs disease (which causes fatal brain damage in babies, primarily affects people of Eastern-European Jewish ancestry) or blood disorders like sickle cell anemia (which mainly affects African Americans) or thalassemia (which mainly affects people of Asian or Mediterranean descent). Your provider also will talk with you about whether you've had all of your immunizations, especially for rubella (German measles). If you haven't had chickenpox or rubella, make sure you are vaccinated at least three months before becoming pregnant. You also may want to be screened for hepatitis B, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and toxoplasmosis (a parasitic infection that can cause birth defects), because these diseases can harm your baby, as well as yourself.

## Taking Folic Acid

Folic acid, one of the B vitamins, is especially important for your and your baby's health before and during pregnancy. Research shows that getting enough folic acid before becoming pregnant and during pregnancy, especially during the first trimester, can greatly reduce the risk of certain birth defects. *Folate*, the natural form of folic acid,

is found in orange juice, other citrus fruits and juices, leafy green vegetables, beans, peanuts, broccoli, asparagus, peas, lentils, and whole grain products. Synthetic (manufactured) folic acid is added to certain grain products, including flour, rice, pasta, cornmeal, bread, and cereals. These foods are considered "fortified" with folic acid. There also are multivitamin pills that contain folic acid. Because it is hard to get the amount of

### Steps You Can Take for a Healthy Pregnancy

It is very important to have a healthy lifestyle when you are thinking about becoming pregnant and when you are pregnant. Here are some things you can do to improve your overall health:

- If you are pregnant, your provider will schedule you for regular checkups throughout the next nine months. Keep all of your appointments—they all are important for your and your baby's health and to avoid problems with delivery.
- Throughout your life it is important to eat a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, grains, and calcium-rich foods. Choose foods low in saturated fat. (*For more information on having a healthy diet, see page 116.*)
- If you smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs, STOP. These behaviors can cause long-term damage to your baby. Ask your health care provider about steps you can take to stop smoking. Talk with a member of your faith community, a counselor, a trusted friend, or your health care provider if you are concerned about your alcohol or drug use.
- Unless your health care provider tells you not to, try to be physically active for 30 minutes, most days of the week. If you are pressed for time, you can get your activity through 10-minute segments, three times a day.
- If you have a cat, do not handle the cat litter. It can carry toxoplasmosis, a parasitic infection that can cause birth defects. Wear gloves when gardening in areas that cats may visit.
- Don't eat uncooked or undercooked meats or fish. These foods can also carry toxoplasmosis and cause other infections.
- Stay away from toxic chemicals like insecticides, solvents (like some cleaners or paint thinners), lead, and mercury. Most dangerous household products will have pregnancy warnings on their labels.
- Avoid hot tubs, saunas, and x-rays.
- Limit or eliminate your caffeine intake from coffee, tea, soda, medications, and chocolate.
- Get informed. Read books, watch videos, go to a childbirth class, and talk with experienced moms. Check out the *Healthy Start, Grow Smart* initiative ([www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/initiatives/healthystart](http://www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/initiatives/healthystart)) sponsored by First Lady Laura Bush. It provides parents with critical information about the early development, health, nutrition, and safety needs of babies and toddlers.



### Steps You Can Take to Care for Yourself after Birth

You will have many physical changes after birth, such as spotting, breast milk coming in, menstrual-like cramping if you breastfeed, and swelling in your legs and feet. Try to:

- Drink eight glasses of water a day to help you recover from labor and relieve constipation.
- Consume calcium-rich foods to keep your bones strong. It is helpful to continue taking a daily multivitamin at this time.
- Keep up your support network. Talk to family members and friends about what you are going through. Share and laugh about new experiences.
- Talk with your health care provider about the kinds of activity you can perform after giving birth.
- Ask your health care provider about methods of birth control because you can get pregnant at this time, even if you haven't had a period since giving birth and you are breastfeeding.
- See your health care provider four to six weeks after the birth. Call right away if you have excessive vaginal bleeding, fever of 101° or higher, severe abdominal pain, severe headaches or visual changes that do not go away, frequent or burning urination, or severe depression.

folate you need daily through diet alone, your provider can prescribe a daily prenatal vitamin that contains at least 400 micrograms (or 0.4 mg) of folic acid. You can also increase foods rich in folate in your diet.

### After the Baby Arrives

Having a new baby is an exciting, but sometimes overwhelming, experience. The first few days at home are a time for you to rest and for getting to know your baby. The first few months will be consumed with eating, sleeping, and caring for the baby. Allow others to help you, and don't be afraid to ask for help. If you are a new mom, it may be helpful to talk with other new moms. You probably will have a range of emotions after your baby is born. Because your hormones change and you will have a lack of sleep, you may have anxiety about caring for the baby. You also may feel sad or want to cry. This is normal. Be patient with yourself. This feeling should get better over time. If you are very sad or unable to care for your baby or yourself, contact your health care provider right away. You could have a condition called postpartum depression, which is usually treatable.

### Babies Were Born to be Breastfed

One of the best things that *only you* can do is to breastfeed. The U.S. Surgeon General recommends that babies be fed with breast milk only—no formula—for the first six months of life. It is even better for your baby to breastfeed for 12 months or longer, for as long as you and your baby wish. You can start introducing solid foods, as you continue breastfeeding, when your baby is six months old.

**If you want to learn more  
about breastfeeding, or need help  
with breastfeeding problems,  
call our Breastfeeding Helpline  
[800-994-WOMAN (9662)]  
9 a.m. - 6 p.m., EST  
Monday through Friday  
We're here for you!**

### Best for Baby

Breastfeeding is best for your baby because your breast milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is needed for a baby's growth and development. They tend to gain less unnecessary weight and to be leaner. This may result in being less overweight later in life. Did you know that breastfed babies also have higher IQs? Breast milk also has antibodies in it to help protect infants from bacteria and viruses and to help them fight off infection and disease.

### Best for You

Breastfeeding is best for you because it saves time and it's free! You do not have to purchase, measure, and mix formula, and there are no bottles to warm in the middle of the night. Breastfeeding also helps you bond with your baby by helping him or her feel more secure, warm, and comforted. Nursing also uses up extra calories, making it easier for you to lose the pounds gained from pregnancy. It also helps your uterus to get back to its original size more quickly and lessens any bleeding you may have after giving birth. Working women can continue to breastfeed even after



going back to work. With careful planning, you can breastfeed while you're at work, attending school, or at any other outside commitment!

### Breastfeeding and Vitamin D

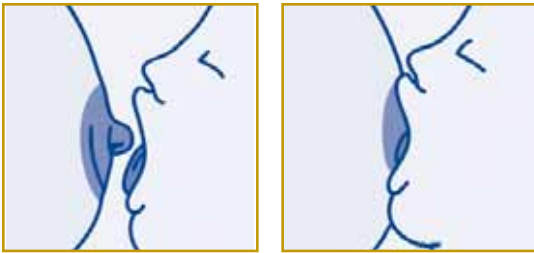
You might have heard that breastfed babies may not get enough vitamin D. Vitamin D helps your baby build strong bones, and, without enough vitamin D, babies can get rickets, a disease that causes their bones to soften. Sunlight can be a major source of vitamin D, but it is hard to measure how much sunlight your baby gets. Things like where you live, the amount of pigment (color) in your baby's skin, and how much time your baby is in the sun, all affect how much vitamin D your baby gets from sunlight.

You should still breastfeed because breastfeeding means healthier moms and babies. All infants, including those who are breastfed and do not get formula, should get at least 200 international units (IU) of vitamin D once a day, every day. Start in the first two months of life and continue until your baby is weaned from breastfeeding. Once your child begins drinking vitamin D-fortified milk after 12 months of age, he/she should continue getting vitamin D drops or a tablet if he/she drinks less than a pint of milk per day. You can buy vitamin D drops or tablets at a drug store or grocery store. You can talk to your pediatrician to make sure your baby gets the right amount of vitamin D.

### Steps You Can Take to Make Breastfeeding a Wonderful Experience

Breastfeeding can be a wonderful experience, so it's important not to get frustrated if you are having problems. What works for one mother and baby may not work for you, so just focus on finding a comfortable routine and positions for you and your baby.

- **Get an early start.** Start nursing as early as you can after delivery (within an hour or two if it is possible), when the infant is awake and the sucking instinct is strong. In the beginning, your breasts contain a special thick, yellowish milk called colostrum, which helps protect your infant from disease.



PROPER POSITION OF BABY'S MOUTH AROUND NIPPLE

Note that baby's lips are around the nipple AND the areola, and the nose and chin are touching the breast. Baby's lips are turned out or "flanged," not tucked in.

- **Use proper positioning for baby's mouth and when holding baby.** The baby's mouth should be wide open. You can tickle your baby's lips with your nipple to get him/her to open wide. Place your nipple in your baby's mouth as far back as possible, and pull his/her body close to you so you are facing each other and touching tummy to tummy. Be sure the baby's lips and gums are around your areola (the darker-colored area surrounding the nipple). The baby should never be latched onto the nipple only. This reduces soreness for you. If your baby is latched on correctly, his/her lips will be turned out, not pulled in over the gums. You may see your baby's jaw move back and forth and hear low-pitched swallowing noises. Your baby's nose will touch against your breast, but he/she is getting enough air. *Breastfeeding should not hurt. If it hurts, take the*

*baby off your nipple and try again.* The baby may not be latched on right. Break your baby's suction to your breast by gently placing your finger in the corner of his/her mouth.

- **Nurse on demand.** Newborns need to nurse often. Watch your baby, not the clock, for signs of hunger, such as being more alert or active, mouthing (putting hands or fists to mouth and making sucking motion with mouth), or rooting (turning head in search of nipple). Crying is a late sign of hunger. Generally, newborns need to nurse at least every two hours. Nurse about 10 to 15 minutes on each breast.
- **Feed your baby only breast milk.** Nursing babies don't need water, sugar water, or formula. Breastfeed exclusively for at least the first six months. Giving other liquids reduces the baby's intake of vitamins from breast milk.
- **Delay artificial nipples (bottle nipples and pacifiers).** A newborn needs time to learn how to breastfeed. It is best to wait until your baby has a good sucking pattern (after about four weeks) before you give her or him a pacifier or bottle. These nipples require a different sucking action than breastfeeding.
- **Breastfeed your sick baby during and after illness.** Oftentimes, sick babies will refuse to eat but will continue to breastfeed. Breast milk will give your baby needed nutrients and prevent dehydration.
- **Air dry your nipples.** This can help keep them from cracking, which can lead to infection. If your nipples crack, coat them with breast milk or other natural moisturizers (like vitamin E oil and lanolin) to help them heal. You don't have to wash your nipples with soap. This might remove helpful natural oils.
- **Watch for infection.** Signs of breast infection include fever, irritation, painful lumps, and redness in the breast. See a health care provider right away if you have any of these symptoms.

- **Treat engorgement.** It is normal for your breasts to become larger, heavier, and a little tender when they start making lots of milk around the second to sixth day after birth. But sometimes this normal fullness may turn into engorgement, when your breasts might become hard and painful. Treat it by feeding the baby often. You also can put warm, wet washcloths on your breasts or take warm baths to relieve pain. If the engorgement is severe, placing ice packs on the breasts between nursings may help. You can help prevent engorgement by positioning your baby right and making sure he/she is latched on well and breastfeeds frequently. Talk with a health care provider or lactation consultant if you continue to have problems.
- **Eat right and get enough rest.** You now need a healthy diet that includes 500 extra calories a day (about 2700 calories total) and enough fluids (drink to thirst, but about eight cups of water per day is best) to avoid dehydration. If you are on a strict vegetarian diet, you should talk with your health care provider about whether you need to increase your vitamin B12 intake. You also need to rest as much as you can, so you stay strong and healthy to care for your baby. Breast infections also are worsened by fatigue.

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**For more information on having a healthy pregnancy and breastfeeding,  
check out these resources:**

**National Women's Health Information Center**

Internet: [www.4woman.gov/Pregnancy](http://www.4woman.gov/Pregnancy) and  
[www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding](http://www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding)  
Phone: 800-994-9662 (includes a new  
breastfeeding helpline)

**Healthy Start, Grow Smart Initiative**

Internet: [www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/  
initiatives/healthystart](http://www.whitehouse.gov/firstlady/initiatives/healthystart)

**Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)**

Internet: [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic)

**Maternal and Child Health Bureau, HRSA**

Internet: [www.mchb.hrsa.gov](http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov)  
Phone: 703-356-1964 (Clearinghouse)

**ABCs...Pregnancy Tips**

Internet: [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/bd/abc.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/bd/abc.htm)

**National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies  
Coalition**

Internet: [www.hmhb.org](http://www.hmhb.org)  
Phone: 703-836-6110

**Publications:**

*An Easy Guide to Breastfeeding for African-American  
Women*

[http://www.4woman.gov/owh/pub/  
aabreastfeeding](http://www.4woman.gov/owh/pub/aabreastfeeding)

*The Right Way to Get Pregnant*

[http://www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/factsheets/  
pregnant/home.htm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/oc/factsheets/pregnant/home.htm)

*A Woman's Guide to Breastfeeding*

<http://www.aap.org/family/brstguid.htm>

*Breastfeeding: Returning to Work*

<http://www.breastfeedingbasics.org/pi/pi-165.pdf>